

(Go immediately to your French class wiki page, where you will find a “clickable version” of this handout at the top of the page.)

Introduction and Purpose:

When you hear the words 'Mardi Gras,' what comes to mind? A commercial for instant dirty rice mix? Loud jazz? Images of women flashing their bodies in exchange for plastic trinkets? That is actually a very limited, media-driven perspective on Mardi Gras... You are going to gain a wider, more accurate view on one of the most fun celebrations in the French-speaking world.

Task

How do people around the Francophone world celebrate Mardi Gras? What are the historical origins of the celebration? How do the celebrations differ from region to region?

Process

You will be researching ONE area in which people celebrate Mardi Gras: Martinique, Nice, New Orleans, or Québec. You should start with the questions that are labeled 'Part I: Background Information' before going on to your part. Each region has its own questions to answer and a separate set of web sites to use. (I will assign your region before you begin part 2.)

Part 1 - Background Information

Before you investigate the celebration in your specific area, please answer the following background questions. Use the linked sites to find your answers, and write them on this sheet.

General info about Mardi Gras - <http://www.holidays.net/mardigras/story.htm>

Did you know? : <http://www.holidays.net/mardigras/didyouknow.htm>

1) What is Mardi Gras?

2) Why do people celebrate it?

3) What are the origins of the celebration?

Part 2 - Roles

Mardi Gras is not celebrated the same way in every part of the Francophone world. Lots of different traditions exist. Investigate the site to which you are assigned (below) and answer the questions. You must be ready to share your answers with others (who will be working on different sites today) in class, tomorrow.

Group A: Martinique -- Carnaval or Vaval: Please answer the following questions. Use the linked sites to find your answers.

Carnaval en Martinique:

http://www.martinicaonline.it/english/carnival_martinique.htm

Carnaval for tourists: <http://www.thecaribbeanamphibian.com/activities-in-martinique-carnival.html>

- 1) When does it take place?
- 2) Who is Vaval, and what happens to him?
- 3) Describe sample themes and activities for the various days.
- 4) What are the parades like?

Group B: Nice, France -- Carnaval de Nice:

Please answer the following questions. Use the linked sites to find your answers.

Carnaval de Nice:

<http://www.nicecarnaval.com/en/carnaval/presentation/theme.php>

Personal Account of Nice Carnival: <http://www.stripes.com/military-life/travel/in-nice-france-carnival-means-blue-skies-flowers-and-plenty-of-skin-1.99352>

- 1) When does it take place?
- 2) Describe the king of Carnaval.
- 3) What is the theme for this year?
- 4) What have some of the themes been in the past?
- 5) What are the parades like?
- 6) How does Carnaval end?

New Orleans, Louisiana -- Mardi Gras:

Please answer the following questions. Use the linked sites to find your answers.

Mardi Gras in New Orleans:

<http://www.gmc.edu/library/neworleans/NOmardi.htm>

Krewes and their schedules: <http://www.mardigrasparadeschedule.com/krewes/>

Throws, balls and Music: <http://www.novareinna.com/festive/throw.html>

1) When does it take place?

2) What is a krewe?

3) What do krewes do?

4) What are the parades like?

5) What are throws?

6) What are the balls like?

Québec, Canada -- Carnaval d'Hiver:

Carnaval d'Hiver 2011- <http://www.examiner.com/canada-travel-in-national/quebec-winter-carnival-announces-2011-festival-schedule>

Carnaval d'Hiver 2013(a link at the top of the site will tell you about Carnaval 2012)

<http://www.carnaval.qc.ca/>

Please answer the following questions. Use the linked sites to find your answers.

1) When does it take place?

2) Who is Bonhomme, what role does he play, and where does he live?

3) What kinds of races take place?

4) What are the parades like?

5) What other events take place?

Part 3 - Reaching Consensus

As a tourist visiting OR a native living in your assigned region, imagine that you have just attended the festivities. What did you see, hear, smell, eat, drink, wear, and feel? Now that you have completed your research, tomorrow you will be grouped with classmates who have researched other areas. Each of you will share your information with the others so that everyone can complete all the questions for each francophone region.

Part 4-Conclusion

After everyone has shared their information, how would you (individually) answer the following questions? (Write your answers.)

1.How has your perspective on Mardi Gras changed?

2. Which region's celebration sounds the most exciting to you? Which of the celebrations would you most like to attend, and why?